1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

brother's, and, with the father's senility recognized, the oldest son assumes his place as head of the family; at least he is looked to for guidance by the brothers and sisters.

Before circumcision, when a small boy finds a wild bees' nest, the honey of which is a greatly prized delicacy, he goes to tell his father (mari, gawel, and others, too), who will open the hollow tree for the boy and allow him with the aid of his small brothers to eat all of it, but will not eat it himself nor allow any but the brothers to touch it. This rule is very important, for it rests upon a magical idea that the boy will have good luck in the hunt and in later finding large nests. Should a man eat any of the boy's first wild bees' honey, a father would consider this more than sufficient cause to fight him. It is the father who takes the initiative in protecting the small boy's interest.

When a child, particularly a son, becomes ill, the father either treats him magically or uses native remedies. Should a mother neglect her child, or through misadventure allow it to be harmed, most fathers would become angry and beat her, and in some cases try to kill her.

When a son dies, the actual father and his brothers lead in the mourning ceremonies; when a father dies, all the varieties of sons within the limits of the clan cooperate in leading these ceremonies. When the bones of a man are exhumed after burial, it is the father who opens the grave and, with the help of the son's dué (the father's waku), cleans the putrid flesh off the bones.

The death of a son is a great social loss to the father, since there is no one to take his place; but the death of a father is felt less severely by the children. If the children are small, they and their mother pass through the levirate to the father's younger brother. If the children are grown, the father usually has become very old and his death causes them little social loss. The death of a father in our own society creates a greater social maladjustment than in the native society. The Murngin children have been calling the father's brother father, and, further, their behavior toward this younger brother of their father has differed but slightly from that toward their own father. The mother does not go back to her own but continues in the same social group. There is no change in the social adjustment of the children or other members of the kinship system. The personal loss of a father to the family and to society is usually keenly felt, as is the death of sons by a father. When a son dies a father beats his own head and attempts to wound himself to show his sorrow.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

595 the son. A dué likes many wives because he tires of cohabiting with
554 one and because such multiplicity creates more sons and daughters, so that he will have more waku, dué, and galle, with stronger bonds between him and them.

513 When in camp a woman sleeps with her back to her husband. If
833 intercourse takes place it is in this position so that no one can be aware of what they are doing.

A dué and galle never copulate during a woman's pregnancy, lest
843 the child be born dead or die early in infancy, the mother's milk being
834 soured by her husband's semen. If a child is born dead the parents are blamed. If a baby dies, the brother and father of the mother criticize
620 their actions throughout the camp in loud voices for her and other members of the tribe to hear. Since sexual intercourse has usually occurred between dué and galle after what they feel should have been the regulated time, they say nothing and do not resent the criticism.

After a child is born the woman and man wait several days before
846 resuming sexual relations. The wife goes through a short ceremony that is both therapeutic and ritualistic. She enters the bush with a female relative such as momo, mari, or mokul bapa, and places some stones on a fire. When these are hot she squats over the fire and the other woman throws water over the stones. The steam is supposed to heal, cleanse and close her uterus and make it small again.

A woman during this period sleeps facing her husband, who does
846 not try to touch her but waits until she turns from him and starts
833 making casual conversation. He realizes then that she wants him. After his first intercourse with his wife following the birth of a child, the husband always rises early and bathes himself. If he did not, he would look like an animal to the other men and feel ashamed before them.[11]

593 A woman gathers the small game, nuts, bulbs, yams, and other vegetable food, as well as all shell food for the family. A man always
222 has first right to the food brought by her. She and her daughters have
462 eaten all they wish while gathering it. A wife usually cooks the food
262 she has brought for her husband. A large part of a family's larder is contributed by the wife. Big game is supplied by the men, who also bring in fish and large sea animals such as turtle, porpoise, dugong and shark.

[11] There is considerable evidence that there is a comparatively strong taboo on sexual relations between man and wife after the man has seen a totem the first time. It is said that the ceremonial leader for the totem would be so angry that he would attempt to spear the culprit.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

open to human occupation by the drying of the land, the burning of the spear grass, and the disappearance of the swarms of vicious insects, these smaller groups coalesce into larger units which may contain as many as thirty or forty people and will contain many more if a large ritual is being celebrated. Every member of this group is related closely to at least one or more other individuals in the group, but to the rest he is only tribally related. Where the sea-turtle eggs on the sand beaches are most plentiful, the oyster beds most prolific and accessible, sea-bird eggs most abundant, lily and yam swamps most productive, and the cycad palm nuts ripened and ready for picking, there will be found the horde groups.

All of the people in the horde will be of friendly clans which are usually closely intermarried; if there are antagonisms they are suppressed or given expression in a peace-making makarata, which allows those involved to remain in harmony. As soon as food is plentiful the better areas usually become locations for the great rituals which take place at this time; the ceremonial life definitely enlarges the size of the horde groups. The camp of the horde is organized spatially in the same way as the clan lands are spatially related to each other.

Ritual sanctions at this time help prevent open strife, which is always a possibility whenever the clans come together. The belief that the totem will be offended if clashes occur between opposing clansmen usually keeps the peace. Ritual sanction, then, is the most powerful force in regulating the peaceful behavior of these larger food-gathering hordes. If it were not for these extreme sanctions the larger hordes could not be formed. Peoples with a background of feud and warfare who might not otherwise risk meeting one another can be fairly certain of peace in a horde gathered for a ritual. Since the local clans which start the ceremony have it well under way and the totemic emblems have been made and are in the camp by the time the first guests arrive, hesitant visitors can feel comparatively safe in coming to the ceremony. The bitterly antagonistic clans, however, who have a continuous blood feud tradition and a record of killing back of them would never be present unless under extreme circumstances; for religious sanctions or peace-making duels would not prevent open strife and possible secret killings between them.

The horde, then, is governed by the seasonal fluctuation of plenty or scarcity, and its extreme in size is effected by the attractive stimuli of important ceremonies.

The usual division of labor obtains during the period of the larger

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

462 222 horde gathering and is intensified by it. The women gather small animals and all vegetable food, and the men fish and kill larger animals, although a man might gather yams or lily bulbs for himself if he were hungry. The women of the various clans of allied groups often go on foraging expeditions together.

2. *Gathering and Preparation of Food—Sexual Division of Labor*

462 261 224 The women furnish the bulk of the daily food. The men's contribution of meat, although much more prized, is less certain. When kangaroos, wallabies, or emus are speared, turtles, dugong or porpoises harpooned, the whole group gorges itself after the meat has been divided properly and cooked in stone fires and ovens. The women are supposed to supply the food for the men while they perform the sacred rituals; although the men may hunt, fish, or go harpooning for sea animals at this time, they do it casually and not as part of their daily routine.

224 In the usual method of hunting kangaroos, a man or several men cover themselves with mud to prevent the kangaroo from seeing and smelling them and wait at a narrow part of the mangrove jungle. A group of young boys, sent to the other end of the jungle, spread out in a long line and start moving toward the men. They bark in a very high tone in imitation of the dingo. The boys progress fairly slowly in order not to frighten the kangaroos into too rapid motion. When the kangaroos get within throwing distance the men attempt to hit them with their stone spears. Kangaroos are also stalked; success here is possible because the animal usually sleeps in the daytime and can easily be approached to within accurate throwing distance.[2]

252 After an opossum has been treed and captured, it is hit on the head and the entrails are removed immediately. The intestinal fat is pulled off and cooked where the animal is captured. The intestines are carefully cleaned and opened and the gut is wrapped around the handle of a spear-thrower. When the opossum is to be cooked, all the openings of the carcass are closed, the hair is singed off, and the carcass put in the ashes and covered over with leaves and ashes. It is not cooked with a stone fire, as are larger animals, such as turtle, emu, kangaroo,

[151] [2] The Murngin are expert in identifying footprints. A little girl eight or nine years old can immediately tell one who made a particular footprint even though there are a hundred or more people who have placed their imprints on the earth about it. This is true even though the member is not present and the print has been made sometime in the past. Small female children of this age would be the poorest of any of the Murngin at identifying footprints.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

Everything that can be digested is eaten, but nothing is done with bone or shell. When the Malays were trading with the natives the shell was exchanged for Malay products.

A man who goes turtle harpooning usually takes three or four men with him to paddle the canoe. He is considered the leader, but helps with the paddling while looking for turtle. The canoe goes beyond the breakwater out into the open sea. Along the sand beaches a goodly number of these animals can be found swimming in to shore to lay their eggs. When the head of the turtle is sighted all the oarsmen paddle as rapidly and silently as possible. They hold their heads and bodies down as low as possible so as not to be seen. When the canoe gets within range the harpooner articulates his harpoon to his spear-thrower and aims it just back of the turtle's head. If he strikes, the turtle dives, taking the head of the harpoon with the rope following to the sea bottom. The rope is held on to if it is possible; if not, it is picked up again when the animal rises sufficiently to bring the rope within reach. When the turtle comes up for air he is sometimes speared again, once more goes down, and the rope again held. When the rope becomes slack and it is felt that the turtle has tired itself, a man jumps overboard, puts his hands at the side of the turtle and attempts to turn it on its back. When he has it in this position the other men pull up on the rope. They catch hold of the turtle's legs and pull it on board. It is then hit on the head with a club. This has to be done carefully because a bite in a vulnerable spot would probably result in death.

Eggs of three species of turtle are eaten. Buckingham and Arnhem Bays are supposed to furnish the largest supply. Nests of crocodiles are sought out along the swampy river banks and their eggs gathered and eaten.

Sharks and crocodiles are harpooned, but usually speared. The backbone of a crocodile is chopped in back of the hind legs to sever the tail and to prevent its striking the hunter. When a sting ray is speared its tail is held in the mouth to prevent the fish's barbed prong from striking the spearsman while he is killing it.

The shallow rock bottoms along the seacoast or the white sand bottoms of the long low beaches where the water is knee to waist deep are the favorite fishing places. A spear-thrower is nearly always used with a fish spear.

Poison is sometimes used to stupefy fish, which then float in the water until gathered in. Dangi, an unidentified vegetable product, is

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

macerated and placed in the pool. Some of the writer's informants claim that a poison grass is used similarly.

A fish is cut in halves the long way and cooked immediately because it is believed that if a bit old when eaten it causes leprosy (but see Magic, page 207).

Oysters, periwinkles, and the many varieties of bivalves gathered by the women are cooked on the shore at the spot where they are collected. A fire is made over stones and the shellfish put on the hot stones and embers. The shells open or crack and the flesh is removed and eaten by the women or placed in small receptacles to be carried home to the men.

Honey is gathered by both sexes, but usually by men. When a hive is discovered in a hollow tree that is not too large the tree is cut down and the trunk split open. The honey is usually eaten where found. Gathering honey is a painless task in Australia because the native bees are stingless. The honey is often put in a water-tight basket, mixed with water and drunk as a beverage. It is never allowed to ferment; the natives have no intoxicating drink. The wax is formed into a ball and put in the men's baskets to be used in the construction of various implements.

Pandanus fruit, ripening about August, is cut up into fine pieces and cooked. The small cabbage palm is gathered about the same time, the whole trunk of the plant being cooked and beaten on a log, and the glutinous product eaten. Spear grass is chewed by the children as well as the other people.

Cycad palm nuts are gathered from the center of the trees by the women with the aid of a forked stick placed against the trunk to make a rough ladder. The nuts are knocked off with a club if they are too high to reach. The outside skin is removed and the kernels are placed in a large basket which is submerged in a fresh-water pool and allowed to remain several days until the poisonous qualities of the green fruit are removed. Sometimes the women first heat the nuts, thus reducing the time for soaking them.

Several varieties of tree grubs are eaten. Both men and women gather them. They select trees which have the proper indications upon them, split open the trunk, and remove the grubs which are washed and eaten raw. They look much like the entrail of a fowl and taste much like a snail.

The nests of all the larger birds are robbed and the eggs eaten. During the proper season the various sea birds lay their eggs in great

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

quantities regularly in certain spots along the coast. These eggs are greatly relished by the natives.[8]

3. *Kinship Customs*

The enlargement of a Murngin's economic behavior is dependent on two factors: (1) the horde; and (2) certain reciprocals in the kinship structure. All the relatives of a Murngin ordinarily exchange gifts with him, but certain kinship personalities do this much more than others. The mother's brother—sister's son relationship has been seized upon as the mechanism for enlarging the economic life of a Murngin man. "Far-off" wakus and gawels are sought by a man, distant not only socially but geographically; the greater distance a man has between him and a trading waku or gawel, the greater pride he exhibits when displaying articles sent or brought to him by his relative, and the greater satisfaction he feels when sending or returning gifts. (See chapter on kinship, page 95.)

The mari-kutara relationship is much the same, except that there is a tendency to indulge in ritual gifts much more than in those from the ordinary material culture. The feathered string which has been the decorative covering of the totemic poles is sent by mari or kutara to the other. This exchange of ritual goods plays a prominent part in the economic life of the people, since if a mari receives a gift from kutara he must, in a not too great period of time, return a present of like ritual value. The finely turned string, often used as ritual string, is usually made by women, at times hundreds of feet of it. It is generously covered with birds' feathers and used on one of the larger totem poles. Obviously a great amount of work on the part of the women and the killing of a large number of birds is required to meet the needs of ritual exchange. Only the red feathers from the breasts

[8] The people of the various areas, particularly those west and east of the Goyder, are always accusing each other of cannibalism. The author can vouch that no cannibals are present among the peoples east of the Goyder and roughly in the Murngin area. The Murngin tell a number of stories of the people south of Cape Stewart which to them prove the existence of cannibalism there. Some of them claim they have seen men's baskets filled with meat which was neither kangaroo nor dunong and which they were convinced was human flesh. In one account I collected, the narrator described watching a cannibal feast. The victim, a large man, was carved and prepared for cooking. There is much scornful joking among the Murngin about these people to the west of them. When they think they see human flesh in the basket of one of these people they say, "Ah, what is this one?" and another Murngin replies, "Oh, that's a kangaroo," with a sarcastic inflection in his voice. The other one says, "Yes, but it doesn't smell just like kangaroo," to which the reply is made, "Oh, well, maybe it's only a dead man."

took from the hive so much wax, bee bread (the pupae of bees) and honey that it filled one of the honey baskets. The place where the tree fell is now the fresh-water stream, Gurakawi, which runs into Trial Bay. [773*]

Again the brother and sister walked northwards, this time searching for the *dua* female wild honey, *liruwar*. Near Caledon Bay they again followed a bee to its hive and, after cutting down the tree, filled another honey basket. The depression made by the fallen tree has since become the Mandarauik River. Still searching for honey, the brother and sister saw many bees near Port Bradshaw but were unable to locate the hive, because the bees, instead of flying to and from their nest, were drinking at a spring. The next bee led them on a long journey from Caledon Bay, cross-country, to Cape Wilberforce, where the contents of a particularly large hive at Jarauu, near Melville Bay, filled many baskets. Again, the tree they felled created a watercourse, this time the Wandarani River.[78] [532]

As *Oijal* and *Neri-neri* were pounding the comb to extract the honey, the sound attracted the attention of a lizard-man. Seeing the brother and sister had collected so much honey, he asked for some and they willingly gave it to him. But as the lizard-man was eating the honey a fragment of stick caught in his throat, causing him to cough and almost choke. For a long time he tried unsuccessfully to extract the stick, then, in disgust, he changed himself into a blanket-lizard, *baltjira* (*Chamydasaurus kingii*). The aborigines say that the stick, now a thin bone, is still in the throat of the lizard. [825]

After that incident *Oijal* and *Neri-neri* went to a group of large caves near Melville Bay and started to cook the wild honey in a large bark dish.[79] While they were engaged in the task an ancestral man, *Wulangini*, was cooking fish at Port Bradshaw. On seeing the large amount of honey the brother and sister were preparing he held up his fish to show what he was cooking, hoping that *Oijal* would offer him some honey in exchange. But *Oijal* insulted *Wulangini* by saying that he did not want his fish; honey was much better food.

After the honey was cooked, *Oijal* and his sister went into the caves, where they have lived ever since. No aboriginal will go near the locality, for fear of *Oijal*, who would cripple him by breaking his legs with boomerangs, then spear but not kill him. *Oijal* would then put the wounded aboriginal in a bark dish, take him into his cave, pound his shins with a stone until they were bent like a boomerang, then starve him to death.

The spirit of such a man, unlike those of other aborigines, does not go to the aborigines' heaven, but lives in the forest until able to enter the body of some woman. When born that child will develop boomerang shins.[80] [775]

78. See engraved smoking pipe, Fig. 62B. [222]

79. Some kinds of honey, when first taken from the hive, burn the throat. After this 'hot' honey, called *bilku*, is cooked by heating it for a while in a bark dish resting in the hot sand and ashes of the camp fire, it becomes much milder in flavour. Cooked honey is *balwara*. [252]

80. The shins of some aborigines are curved and flattened like a boomerang. This is caused by the tropical disease of yaws. [164]

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

*773 *532 filling the panel *e*, symbolizes the bush-fire.[86] They also represent the white-barked eucalyptus trees, *garnai*, once the men who took part in the ceremony. On panel *f* are the paper-bark trees of the Matamataui swamp, and on panel *g* the hive of wild bees which escaped to Milingimbi. The diamonds indicate the paper-bark trees at Matamataui.[87]

Plate 93D is another representation of the bush-fire on the Gainmani River. On the two lower panels are nine camp-fires, the circles representing the fire and radiating cross-hatched lines the logs of wood on the fire. The two large circles, with a human figure inside, are bark huts, each having a camp-fire at the entrance. The parallel cross-hatched bands at *a* represent a stack of firewood, the longitudinal band, *b*, the Gainmani River and the cross-hatched band, *c*, a nearby range of hills. The area destroyed by the fire is represented by the two upper panels, the curving parallel lines to the left being a tributary of the Gainmani River.

Aborigines Gathering Eggs of Sea-birds

[223] This painting deals with the time when two groups of aborigines, in their canoes, went to an island where the sea-birds nested. They gathered many eggs and brought them back to camp.

Plate 93C illustrates some of the incidents of that journey. The left-hand panel is the island covered with nesting sea-birds. The birds on the left are sitting on their eggs, while those on the right adjacent to two men are in flight. The numerous white dots are eggs. On the left-hand side, near some of the nests, are fish which the birds have brought in to feed their young. On the right are two canoes, loaded to the gunwale with eggs (white dots). The two rectangular cross-hatched areas in this panel represent rough water which almost swamped the canoes. The three dolphins, lower right, were seen on the outward journey.

The Man, Walanwanga, at Garawinu Island

During creation times a mythical *dua* man lived on a small island, Garawinu, east of Woodah Island.

[136] *Walanwanga*, who was skilled in fishing and hunting, was successful in capturing many dolphins, fish, water-snakes and green turtles. Since that time, there has always been an abundance of those creatures at Garawinu Island.[88]

On the upper and lower panels of Pl. 91A are five dolphins, *indjapana*, and between them three water-snakes, *jalu*; the small fish are unidentified. In the central panel are five green turtles, *gariwa*. The ovals above and below are rocks that project from the sea, the haunt of many green turtles, and the transverse lines, *a* and *b*, reefs of rock outside Garawinu Island.

[302 881] 86. The design of the *gumaitj mata* of Caledon Bay, Fig. 63M. The same fire symbol was painted in the body of an initiate during a circumcision ceremony at Yirkalla, Pl. 129C.

87. The design of the *dalwonga mata* of Blue Mud Bay, Fig. 63J.

88. This is a parallel myth to that of the *jiritja* island of Garabi, off the coast of Port Bradshaw, p. 370.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Ol17 Maragin Ol17

them, the lower dark-coloured edge of the clouds before they discharge their rain. Panel *g* is occupied by the *jiritja* hawksbill turtle, *koumeruadji*.

On the reverse side, K, *a* refers to the open sea, and the row of small triangles below, small clouds resting upon it; *tinimbu*, the queen fish, is in panel *b*. The devil-ray, *mulara*, is at *c*, also surrounded by cloud symbols. At *d* are more cloud symbols, and at *e*, another engraving of *mulara*.

The engravings on the obverse side of the companion paddle, C, deal with the devil-ray, *mulara*, and the turtle, *koumeruadji*, and on the reverse side, D, with the turtle only. On C, *mulara*, the devil-ray, is in panel *g*, surrounded by the clouds which he creates when anyone goes near his home in Port Bradshaw. The transverse bands, *f*, *h* and *m*, are rough seas made by him at the same time as the clouds. Near the head of *mulara* is a queen fish, *tinimbu*. At *j* is the hawksbill turtle surrounded by rocks, and at *n* and *k* are thunder-clouds which have discharged their rain.

On the reverse side, D, the cross-hatched bands, *a*, *c* and *f*, represent the rough seas made by the turtle, *koumeruadji*, when he is disturbed because the aborigines have approached his home. The triangles on panel *b* are the clouds, *tarul*, caused by the water the turtle blows into the sky, and the two triangles, *e*, the wind that originates in those clouds. The hawksbill turtle is at *d*, the triangles on either side of him being rocks near his totemic place.

Whilst on a canoe journey with the aborigines, I noticed that one of their paddles was covered with engraved designs. At the completion of the journey the aborigines traded this paddle, Fig. 58A, B, to me and explained the designs, all of them referring to the *jiritja* totemic creatures and natural features of Port Bradshaw.

Fig. 58A, B shows the obverse and reverse sides of the paddle. In panel *a* of A is the devil-ray, *mulara*, two hawksbill turtles, *koumeruadji*, and two queen fish, *tinimbu*. At *b* is a thunder-cloud created by *mulara*, and along the sides and above *b*, in the form of triangles, a number of smaller clouds.

The reverse side, B, shows panel *c* occupied by another thunder-cloud with smaller clouds, triangles, along its sides. The triangles in panel *d* indicate open thunderstorms.

(b) CAPE ARNHEM

Mythical Human Beings

Boralo-boralo and his Wives at Cape Arnhem

A mythical *jiritja* man, *Boralo-boralo*, and his two wives, *Mambuno* and *Wurungil*, once lived at Kunbulbula, near Cape Arnhem. *Boralo-boralo* was an expert hunter of both the animals and the hives of wild bees. In the middle of a saline flat at the totem place of *Boralo-boralo* was a wooden penis. This was the penis of *Boralo-boralo*. Until recently, when anyone in the vicinity was going to search for the hives of wild bees, he first visited the wooden penis and, striking it with a branch, said:

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 O117 Murngin O117

222 773* 788

'Make my eyesight keen so that I can see the flight of the bees.'

This ritual enabled the hunter to see the bees and to follow their flight more easily,[85] because of *Borolo-borolo's* ability to do so during mythical times. Even though, at the present time, the wooden penis is no longer in its totemic place, the aborigines still visit the same spot and repeat the formula, which they say still makes their eyesight much clearer.[86]

Borolo-borolo's wife, *Mainbuno*, was also expert in locating the wild yam, *jakwa*, and every place in which she once dug for them is known. Today, the women visit these places and, putting their digging sticks on the spot where *Mainbuno* had dug previously, say, 'Brr' in a low voice. After that, they find many *jakwa* yams.

773* 532*

Two paintings, a painted wooden penis and a bark figure (not published) illustrate the myth.

On Pl. 110A is *Borolo-borolo* walking through the grass, with his hand shielding his eyes from the sun as he watches the flight of a wild bee towards its hive. On the left is an emu and a wallaby which ran away when they saw *Borolo-borolo*, and on the right the three yams, *jakwa*, which *Borolo-borolo's* wife, *Mainbuno*, had created. The tubers are at the top of the painting and their foliage is at the bottom.

Plate 110C is a duplicate of the wooden penis of *Borolo-borolo* which the aborigines made for me and on which they painted the design of the yam, *jakwa*.

Plate 110D[87] pictures *Borolo-borolo* with his two wives, *Mainbuno* and *Wurungil*.[88] *Borolo-borolo* is setting out to hunt kangaroos and emus and his wives to collect *jiritja* honey, the female, *barangit*, which burns the mouth, and the male, *kamo*, a pleasant-tasting honey. *Mainbuno* is in the upper position, and *Wurungil* in the lower. Below the family is a forest of stringy-bark trees (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*). The cross-hatched panels on the right represent the wild honey collected by the women, the three dark-coloured areas being *barangit* and the light-coloured ones *kamo*.

Spirit People

776 538* 775

Five bark paintings and an engraved paddle deal with the spirit people, the *Mokoi*, some of whom travel regularly from Nalkuna, the *jiritja* heaven, to their totemic place on the southern side of Cape Arnhem[89] so that they can spear dugongs, turtles and fish to provide the inhabitants of Nalkuna with food. Two others, the woman *Wulu-wulu* and the man *Kultana*, visit Port Bradshaw so

85. The method of locating the hives is to watch the direction of the flight of the bees, an exacting task, for the insects are little larger than the common house fly.

86. This is, to some degree, an increase centre. The penis of *Borolo-borolo* is also an example of the care that must be taken before attaching an erotic significance to any representation of the sex organ.

87. Interpretation by F. D. McCarthy.

88. Elkin and the Berndts (1950), p. 41, Pl. 5A, figure and describe a wooden trumpet or drone tube associated with *Borolo-borolo* and the yams.

89. Map, Fig. 57.

[text continues on p. 345]

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 Oil7 Muragin Oil7

THE ART OF YIRRKALLA

(8) The Art of Milingimbi

The Rev. Arthur F. Elkenor made a small collection of Milingimbi bark paintings for the expedition, together with simple but incomplete interpretations. This collection was valuable because it shows that the art of Milingimbi, on the west of north-eastern Arnhem Land, and that of Yirrkalla on the east, are similar both in design and mythological content.

The Wild Honey, Koko

The honey of the stingless bee is one of the few sweet foods in the aborigines' menu. Many hours are spent searching for this food and a great deal of labour expended climbing the trees and cutting out the hives. Four bark paintings[66] were collected dealing with the mythical wild-honey ancestors of Milingimbi.

Plate 125C is associated with a mythical wild-honey woman, called *Birikuru*, whose camp was on the mainland south of Elcho Island. This site is a totemic place of the wild honey, *koko*. The painting is a conventionalized representation of a hive of wild bees, the projection from the upper edge being the 'nose' or entrance to the hive, and the central disc, the beeswax. The cross-hatched diamond-shaped patterns covering the bulk of the painting represent the honey comb, the white lines forming the margins of the various cells, the beeswax, and the dotted diamonds the eggs and young bees in the nursery cells.

Plate 125A is another painting of a hive of wild honey. The symbolism is similar to that in C, except that the artist has shown four entrances to the hive.

Plate 125D pictures *koko*'s totemic place at Murnarambul, near Arnhem Bay. The three transverse panels, *a*, *a*, *a*, and the vertical cross-hatched one, *b*, refer to logs lying on the ground near Murnarambul, in which there are hives of wild bees. Within the design made by these four logs are hives of wild bees. These hives are pictured with the same symbols as those in A and C, the two long triangular projections at the top of the painting being entrances to the hive.

Plate 125B is another painting of a hive of wild bees, using the traditional symbolism to show the wax, honey, eggs and young bees. The long rectangular design in the middle of the bark painting is a hollow tree in which there is a hive of bees, the honey and comb. The hive is again shown at the bottom of the central panel. The entrance or nose of the hive is a long tapering design at the top. The side panels illustrate two more hives.

Mimala, the Fresh-water Tortoise

Plate 126A pictures a forest area near Arnhem Bay, called Jaraga, the totem place of the mythical fresh-water tortoise, *mimala*.[67] Three of these tortoises are shown at the top of the painting, the designs on each carapace representing the water-grass often growing on the backs of these creatures. The three dark-coloured vertical lines, *a*, *a*, *a*, are logs and the four panels of diamond-shaped

66. These designs are similar to those of the *dalurunga mala*, Fig. 61J.
67. *Mimala*, the fresh water tortoise, is also pictured on an engraved smoking pipe, Fig. 30D; on a painted coffin, Pl. 105B; and on another bark painting, Pl. 119A.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

Arnhem Land, social organization: the division of society into two groups (that is, moieties) was, with the kinship structure, the traditional norm. But within recent years the sub-section system has been introduced from the south and south-west, coming up the coast through Rose River and Blue Mud Bay. In the Milingimbi region it seems to have been introduced at an earlier date, through contact with the inland tribes, particularly the Reinbaranga. At Yirrkalla, however, the sub-sections are not yet completely co-ordinated with the kinship terminology, and among the older people are not in constant use. Certain sub-section terms are however mentioned from time to time in this work, in reference to Ancestral Beings; they will not be discussed in this context, and reference should be made to the work of L. Warner, T. T. Webb, A. P. Elkin and R. Berndt.[3]

c The Religious Quality of Yirrkalla Social Life:

Yirrkalla society, like most other Australian Aboriginal communities, whether of desert, hill or coast, must forage for its food, the abundance of which depends on the particular environment. On the north coast and rivers of Arnhem Land, food of many varieties is available in great quantities. In spite of this, however, its constant supply is said to depend on the rhythm of the seasons, upon the mythical characters of the Eternal Dreaming Period, and on the performance of associated ritual and ceremony. In order to ensure a constant supply of food, in the form of natural species generally, these aborigines rely on the great ceremonial cycles of *djunggawon*, *kunapipi*, *ngu:rlmak*, and the *dua* and *jiritja nara* cycles which are usual in this region. These rituals, associated with the principal Ancestral Beings such as Djanggawul, Wauwalak, Laintjung, Banaitja and Baijini, are the basis of indigenous religion. But they are not concerned merely with the provision of food. Their purpose is, primarily, to ensure the continuation of the human species; the increase of all other animals, birds, fish, vegetable matter, and so on, is only an adjunct to the main theme.

This religion then is a dominant quality in Yirrkalla life, and is reflected in all its institutions and conventional forms of behaviour. It concerns itself with the fructification of all living things, and in that category human beings themselves are considered the most important. As, however, the Kunapipi cult is especially concerned with their rhythmic sequence of birth and rebirth, it is crystallized in a definite concept of a Fertility Mother. Moreover, the cult is concerned with the coming and going of the seasons, the appearance and disappearance of vegetable and plant matter, and the propaga-

3. *Vide* L. Warner, *op. cit.* 1937, pp. 116–124, and his Morphology and Functions of the Australian Murngin Type of Kinship, *American Anthropologist*, n.s. 33, 2, 184; T. T. Webb, *op. cit.* pp. 406–408; A. P. Elkin, *op. cit.* pp. 412–416; R. Berndt, *Love Songs of Arnhem Land*, Chap. I.

live in the single men's camp. The brother-sister tabu, which is very strict, now comes into operation, and his sisters as well as his mother are prohibited from eating any of the game that he kills and which is now known by a special term, *kälŋboi*. But he still receives vegetable food from his mother and from certain other female relatives which he reciprocates with gifts of fish, honey or "sugar bag" and any other food the eating of which is not restricted by *kälŋboi* tabus. Later as he acquires status and the tabus upon the game he kills are removed or relaxed, he will make regular reciprocal gifts of animal food to his *ŋandi* and to the other female relatives upon whom, prior to his marriage, he was dependent for vegetable food. 262 431 593 602 883

The division of labour is well-marked. The chief task of the woman, besides the bearing of children, is the collection and preparation of vegetable food and of shellfish, as well as such small game as rats, bandicoots, opossums and *kuku*, "sugar bag", the honey of the small black native bee (*Trigona* spp.), as she may glean by the way. Each woman works for her own family group—her husband and children—but some of the food that she obtains may also be sent to relatives to whom she has obligations defined by kinship. Others again may be prohibited from partaking of this food because of their kinship or other status at certain stages of their own or the woman's relationship to the society. Most of the food obtained by a woman during menstruation is tabu to certain relatives—particularly to her brothers. Contrary to the general idea the main food supply among aborigines, except at certain restricted seasons of the year, is not animal, but vegetable, and in Arnhem Land upwards of sixty food plants are known. Some of these are local and are obtained more or less casually and in small quantity. But a comparatively small number, which 222 462 [594 602] 222 262 [602] [841]

222 constitute staple foods, are gathered in great bulk, which
262 can be measured in tons, and these plants provide as regular a harvest of food as cultivated gardens. In Eastern Arnhem Land the most important of the staple foods are *ŋätu*, the fruit of a Cycad, two or more species of yam, one, a long yam called *gulläkku* (*Dioscorea transversa*) and a round
[252] yam *djitama* (*D. sativa*, var. *rotunda* etc.) which possesses a poisonous property which must be leached out after cooking, *kinipirri* (a wild *Taro*), very local in distribution, and *dirrpo*, water lilies, (*Nymphaea*) of several species, of which both seeds and rootstocks are eaten. In the coastal area, by far the most important staple food from the time the salt plains dry after the wet until the onset of the rains at the end of the dry season, is *rakai*, the small round corm of the Tall Spike Rush, which grows in great quantities, covering hundreds of acres of ground on the coastal plains, especially in areas subject to periodic flooding with brackish water. The corm of this plant is about the size of a hazelnut, and when eaten raw, has much the same flavour. *Rakai* is also
[252] cooked, and is prepared by roasting in hot ashes, when it is hammered with a wooden mallet into the form of a small cake resembling nut-meal of coarse texture.

252 The fruit of the Cycad, *ŋätu*, which was mentioned above, must be soaked for a period of from three to five days to leach out soluble poison which it contains. After this it is ground, moulded into a cake which may weigh several pounds, wrapped in a neat parcel in paperbark, and cooked in hot ashes, when it bears a resemblance to a very heavy,
262 coarse, unleavened bread. Vast quantities of *ŋätu* are gath-
[251] ered in the course of the year. It has the merit that, unlike most other foods of the aborigines which must be eaten immediately after preparation, it can be kept for some days or weeks. The fact that it is very abundant gives *ŋätu* a

special value in native economy, for it enables the women to maintain an adequate food supply on ceremonial occasions when hundreds of people are gathered in one camp for weeks or months at a time, who could not otherwise be supported for such periods on local resources. *ŋätu* is also the principal food eaten in Arnhem Land on ritual occasions. After it has been received by the old men it is then dedicated ceremonially to the *räŋga*, the sacred totemic object, by the *Dälkärrämirri*, who recites aloud over it the "big" or sacred names of the totem. It now becomes sacramental food and may not be eaten or even handled by the profane, that is, by any but men fully initiated to the particular totem to which it has been dedicated.

Although, as was stated above, *ŋätu* can be kept, after preparation, for several days, the natives of Arnhem Land, in common with other Australian aborigines, do not store food, but are dependent for their subsistence on the result of each day's hunting. In Arnhem Land a single species of fruit, *mundjutj*, (*Buchanania Muelleri*), which is harvested in great quantity in the wet season, chiefly January and February, is sometimes spread out in the sun to dry until it becomes wrinkled and shrivelled like a prune. It is then distinguished by a separate name, *bindjitj*, from the fresh fruit, *mundjutj*. The method of preparation is as follows: After a preliminary exposure to the sun the fruit is rubbed with red ochre and again dried until it is hard and brittle, after which it is wrapped up neatly in parcels of teatree bark. In this form *bindjitj* may be stored for weeks or even months—a practice almost unprecedented among these nomadic hunting people. The subsequent preparation of *bindjitj* is carried out by pulverising the dried fruit, including the hard seed, with pounding-stones, wetting both fruit

222 484 Even when they are making for a definite camping ground, aborigines very rarely travel in a straight line. Instead, the journey is made slowly, with deviations to favoured localities which are likely to yield food or game, so that they can hunt as they go. The women and children search for vegetable food as they travel, pausing at intervals to dig yams or other roots, which are put in a "dilly bag" or basket (*bäti*) carried for the purpose. Meanwhile the men are on the lookout for sugar bag (wild honey), opossums, bandicoots (*Isoodon*), native cats (*Dasyurus*), as well as snakes and goannas (*Varanus*) or any other game which they can find. On these journeys nothing comes amiss, and in addition to the quest for food, both men and women pause to gather any materials of use in technological [314] processes, which they may see. The young branches of such [283] trees as *bulgut*, (*Brachychiton paradoxum*), which form an important source of the fibre used for making string, are cut, the bast fibre stripped and tied neatly or rolled up, to be put into their dilly bags for later use. When a "sugar bag" or wild bees' nest is found the honey and even the bee bread is eaten on the spot, unless there is a large [415] amount, when it is carried in a bark trough or a closely [237] woven basket of special type called *timbuka*. The soft black wax is roughly moulded into a ball and carried in this form, to be cleaned and refined later, and used for the mounting of certain spear heads, particularly for *ŋämbi* and *kaiyit* (flint and iron respectively).

[221] 222 512 When the vegetable harvest is at its height, about the middle of the south-east season, and the people are living chiefly on a single staple food which can be harvested readily in one place, the women generally go out in a body. [476] But at such times, although they work close together, there IS NO POOLING OF RESOURCES; EACH COLLECTS 30 FOOD INDEPENDENTLY, WORKING FOR HER OWN FAMILY OR FAMILY GROUP.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

is no pooling of resources; each collects food independently, working for her own family or family group. And again, as they travel, the women gather any materials they chance to find which may be of use later, in technology. In this way the people accumulate a reserve of string, fibre, (in various stages of manufacture), resin, bone for making of yam knives and awls, for domestic use, or for canoe and bark trough manufacture, and all the materials regularly used in technology. These are carried in the *bäti*, generally in the form of neat parcels wrapped in *bärrukälla* (*Melaleuca* bark). When the men make a chance visit to an area famed for its spear woods, pigments, or other special material, they gather this and carry it in reserve, for later gift or exchange purposes. Similarly, feathers or down (*rämmän*) of birds are collected, and *bulnyin*, the fur of the Brush-tailed Possum, which is valued also for ceremonial purposes, is stripped before the animal is cooked. The spines (*dimir*) of stingrays are also extracted and all materials useful for technological and ceremonial purposes are removed while an animal is being prepared, wrapped in neat parcels in paperbark and placed in the dilly bag until required for use. As this material is generally carried by the natives in their baskets when they are hunting, they are able to make use of any moments of leisure during a halt, or while food is being cooked, to repair and maintain implements and utensils.

222 512 222 237 314 512 [492] [430] [317] 461

Certain materials, particularly the fat of *kärritjämbäl* the Red Kangaroo, and of a few other animals, and the fat and feathers of some birds, chief of which are the Emu, Plain Turkey or Bustard, the Jabiru and Native Companion, which are difficult to approach, have a high "social value" and are greatly prized. These materials have a ritual sig-

237 [435] 778

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943) 1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

142
291
301
516
412
222

The woman is the provider of the vegetable food, which forms the chief food supply.

Plate 9. Women of Blue Mud Bay with their yam sticks, gathering corms of the Tall Spike Rush (*Heleocharis sphacelata*), which, for several months towards the end of the dry season, is one of the staple foods.

[p.58(D)]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

disease, scarcity of food compels the occupants to look for fresh sites.

Well-defined tracks link food-gathering areas and meander in or around jungles and along swamps and creeks wherever there is good hunting. Accompanied by a couple of aboriginal families and a few boys, I followed one of these tracks for about forty miles to where a distant horde had migrated. Men went ahead with their spears, and the women followed with young children, family possessions, and food-gathering dilly-bags. Every little while there was an outbreak of squealing from the women and yelping from the dogs, as a bush rat or other animal was dragged from a hollow log or tree. Occasionally a woman darted off from the track and some miles farther on rejoined the party with a bundle of edible roots or yams.

By sundown we left the bush and came out on a sandy beach on the northern shores of Port Bradshaw, and men and boys were soon lying on the sand waiting for the women to prepare the camps, dig in the sand for fresh water, and cook the shellfish. Once the food was ready, the women took it to their husbands, who shared it with unmarried companions. Darkness comes quickly in the north, and married men settled down with their wives and children around their separate family fires, whilst the unattached males discreetly camped some distance away. Unmarried men always separate themselves from family groups, and any visiting males temporarily without wives stay with the bachelors. Not infrequently married men determine where the bachelors' camp is to be made, and with vivid memories of their own youthful and indiscriminate ways, rigorously enforce this segregation. In the bush, ever-courteous nomads reserved a place for me beside the young men's fire, but never anywhere near a family group, although the youths have sometimes been strangers and the married families well known to me.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

and everything connected with it, including fish, turtle, and other food carried in it, were tabu to women and children. It appeared that two days previously the horde had migrated from the south and had brought a skeleton in the canoe, thereby rendering it tabu to women and children. It was another case of mumbakuta.

Sons and sons-in-law of the deceased person brought the fish ashore and ate them around a totemic well scooped in the sand. The leavings were carefully buried in the 'well' and the customary fire lit over them. The camp then went to the canoe on the beach, lit a fire on the sand, and taking leafy branches held them in the smoke and switched them over the canoe to hunt off the ghost of the dead man. Once the skeleton's influence on the canoe was removed, it was safe to travel in, and food could be eaten from it.

Skeletons are customarily carried in bark parcels and exert far-reaching influences, and 'mali', or ghosts, accompanying such bones must be placated. In an exchange I made with Yama for his father's bones (which I wanted to send to the Sydney Museum), I bartered several items for the complete skeleton in its bark cylinder with his horde's totemic symbols painted on the outside. Unknown to me, there were two powerful influences in the bark parcel, one in the bones and the other in the totemic symbols on the bark itself; for such bones laid a tabu on all they touched, just as they would have done if carried in a canoe, and the bark cylinder, by having a totemic sign painted on it, was sacred. Among the items I had exchanged for the skeleton was an axe, so it was agreed that for ceremonial purposes, this should absorb the tabu from the bones and also from the bark cylinder. Thereafter only the nearest relatives could touch it. To remove the skeleton tabu from the axe, Yama cut open a tree containing a bee's nest. Because of the tabu, only fully initiated men of the horde could eat it; but after the meal, the axe was painted to make it

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

safe for everyone to use. But the influence of the totem on the cylinder still remained in the axe, and it could therefore be used only by near relatives. To overcome this, Yama cut a canoe, thereby transferring the totemic influences to it. The dug-out was 'de-ghosted' in much the same way as if it had carried the actual bones; fish caught from it were ceremonially eaten, and it was switched with smoking twigs to drive off the tabu.

'Ghostly' help is freely sought by hunters to assist them in their search for food. It is generally accepted that if the ghost, or mali, of a dead man is harnessed it will assist in the hunt by rounding up fish, birds, or animals. A ghost dims the eyes of the game so they cannot see clearly, blocks their ears so they cannot hear the hunter, and plays such havoc with their noses that he is unrecognizable.

To obtain the assistance of such a ghost, a hunter must carry a 'maiwola' or small piece of bone, hair, skin, or blood from the corpse. Small bones, hair, or other parts of a body, may be had for the asking when a corpse is being dismembered in any normal burial ceremony, and these 'hunting-charms' are wrapped in bark and hung round the neck. The ghost, or mali, lurks near its skeleton and, as in the instance of a skeleton carried in a canoe, exerts influence over it and all that it touches. But when a hunter carries a piece of the body as a charm, he is able to control the ghost so that it does his bidding, and when he is hunting the ghost follows the charm. If it happens that several men have obtained charms from the same corpse, and in different parts of the country go hunting at the same time, the ghost will serve one and then hurry off to help another. This explains why charms are not always effective, for if a hunter catches nothing, that is because the ghost is otherwise engaged, or is away lurking by the main part of its skeleton, which is wrapped in bark and carried by a tribal mother.

Any strange event can be readily explained by attributing

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OII7 Murngin OII7

it to invisible wandering ghosts. They haunt old scenes after death, and the signs of their whereabouts are easily recognized from their mischievous habits. Burramurra was our interpreter and spent a lot of time with us, and one day, when he went 'walk-about', a ghost hid his dinner. He had found a nest of turtle eggs and covered them with sand whilst he went for oysters; on his return it seemed that some of the eggs had disappeared, and when he had searched in vain for Yulengor footprints he naturally concluded that some mali had been at work. Two weeks later he heard that a relative had died, and thereupon concluded that the mali of the dead relative had taken the eggs to show that he was a spirit and no longer in the flesh.

Jirring was the best-built and most attractive warrior I have ever seen. He was tall and powerful, yet he burst into my camp one night and agitatedly stammered: 'Ngarakala gurapan bureiala, bukorjulni'—in other words: 'Please give me a lantern.' When I asked him why he wanted it, he said that a mali had run over his chest and wakened him, and he was convinced that it was the ghost of his father, who was away visiting in a distant horde. I had seen his father only a few days previously, so I told him that he must have been dreaming, but he was morbidly confident that his father had been killed and that his spirit had returned with the news. Nor could Jirring be convinced otherwise, until his father returned to camp and he both saw and touched him.

On another occasion, on our way back to Yirrkala after midnight, several men and I were filing along a bush track and saw fires on a hillside. I imagined they were the smouldering remains of recent bush-fires, but no such simple explanation occurred to the nomads, who immediately lowered their voices and questioningly murmured to each other: 'Mali? Mali?' On arrival at the station we saw that something was amiss, for the whole camp was wailing and singing. We were told that a raid had been made over one

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

YULENGOR

Lagoons overflow in the wet season and hundreds of acres of low-lying land are under water. It is country where water-lilies grow in profusion. Women dive for the root-stocks and roast great quantities of them. Lily seed-pods are eaten raw, sieved through network dilly-bags, or ground between stones and baked into cakes.

The most palatable of all vegetable food is probably the corm or swamp rush, 'rarkai', and these swamps are famous throughout Arnhem Land. Rarkai rushes cover brackish swamps near the coast, and women systematically turn over many acres of black mud in their search for the nut. In east Arnhem Land I know of several such swamps, each of which supported a hundred or even two hundred Yulengor for six weeks at a time. During the corm season the hordes make the swamps a rendezvous for corroborees, ceremonies, and initiations. Corms are about the size of marbles, and in addition to being the most nutritious of all their vegetable foods they possess a pleasant nutty flavour.

Several foods have totemic significance and find a place in ceremonial practices. Probably the most important of these is 'ngutu', the nut of the cycad palm, and it is said that this yellowish brown nut was first eaten by spirit-Ancestors, who instructed their daughters in the art of preparing it. Legend declares that as the knowledge was received first by women, they have for all time to attend to the gathering and cooking of all vegetable foods.

Hard-shelled cycad nuts are cracked between stones, and the kernels soaked in water for three or even five days. Most of the poison is thus leached out, and the pulp is wrapped in bark and buried in hot sand over which a fire is lit. Cycad meal can be baked into flat coarse cakes that sometimes weigh up to fifteen pounds, that keep for days, and can be carried long distances for use at ceremonial gatherings. 'Ngutu' has sustaining properties, and Yulengor live on it for weeks as they prepare for inter-tribal corroborees.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OII7 Murngin OII7

Variety in this otherwise uninteresting vegetable diet is provided by fish, birds, reptiles, and small animals. Women fossick in jungles for land-snails and large white wood-grubs, and when the tide is out they comb the mud flats and reefs for mangrove worms, shellfish, oysters, lobsters, and crabs.

Some women train dingoes to help in their ceaseless search for small animals, reptiles, birds, and eggs. A dingo pup, captured in the bush, henceforth shares the family shelter, travels in the canoe, and is fed and petted with the children. They are often called 'son' by the owner and referred to by the relationship term used for the owner or his child. When a favoured dog dies, it is buried and wept over in much the same way as a child. Women gash their heads and wail, one of the men conducts a mourning-song and dance, and I have seen them switch themselves with leafy twigs to drive off the canine ghost!

Dingoes breed freely with domesticated dogs, and most of the wild dogs in Arnhem Land now bear unmistakable traces of the white man's dog. However, the pure-bred dingo is by no means extinct, and there are many of these large, strong, good-looking brown dogs in Arnhem Land. When they are well fed (they seldom are), they grow to almost twice the size of a kelpie and are attractive in appearance, but they cannot bark. It seems certain that the dingo migrated with the first aborigines, and Dr F. Wood-Jones, an authority on the dingo, says: 'The dingo and the Stone Age dog of Europe are practically identical and both but little removed from the Palearctic wolf stock from which they sprang. Man and dog were both migrants.'

Several Yulengor legends referred to the creation of dingoes by aboriginal Ancestors. In one story, it was said that having already formed the nuclei of several hordes, the Ancestors came to the grassy plains south of Arnhem Bay, where they made a magpie, an opossum, and two dingoes. Summer showers drove the birds into a tree, where they

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

firing long grass to drive out edible snakes, rats, and goannas. Others searched the beaches for concealed turtle nests, which often yield from five to ten dozen eggs.

Raids are common, and as the men are killed the vendetta passes from one generation to another. Entire hordes have been exterminated, and today there are several remnants in which a couple of women or old men are all that remain from clans once large. Usually the feuds continue till the parties find it desirable to negotiate for peace to allow some ceremony to be held. Big ceremonies involving several hordes are invariably preceded by these peacemaking 'Makkarratas', for before they can sing and dance together they must adjust their differences.

For the 'makkarrata', the opposing clans take up positions about two hundred yards apart and face each other. Members of the offending horde run again and again toward the avengers, who throw spears at them. If the offence is a serious one, the killer may be killed; but the culprit uses his skill to side-step the spears, and it is seldom that these trials-by-ordeal prove fatal. Having agreed to establish peace, the avengers throw their spears as a gesture of disapproval, often with no intent to harm.

Once the avengers have thrown their spears and exhibited their indignation, a neutral party conducts the culprit to them. He reverses his spears and hands them over, turns his back and presents a thigh for a spear to be plunged into it. By the drawing of blood the crime is expiated and tension is released. Avengers and neutrals crowd round the culprit, congratulating him in the friendliest manner and ridiculing the idea of bad blood ever existing between them. Usually they make a combined camp and spend the night in singing and dancing.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Two Women and a Serpent

Long after the creative Ancestresses disappeared into the west, two other vague heroines came from that direction. It is not known where they came from, except that their birthplace was in the darkness beyond the setting sun. They came to discover the land from which the sun rose and to explore this world of light. 773*

By the time they reached Arnhem Land their journey had developed into a triumphal march from one sacred site to another. They finished the work of the Junkgowa by distributing arts and crafts and animals. They also made a new palm-leaf dilly-bag and manufactured the first stone axe-heads, as well as providing two or three quarries from which they are now chipped. Bush food was scarce before their time, and they distributed edible animals and made the popular 'sugar-bag' or native bees' nests. These minute stingless bees build small nests in hollow trees. Nomads cut an opening and scoop out a pint of wax and watery syrup mixed with chips and scores of bees. They eat the lot. Families camp in the hills for a week or more, and live on 'sugar-bag', with land-snails, goannas, and small animals to give some variety to this diet. 262 [136] [227]

The Women came one day to a high circular hill covered by dense vegetation and inhabited by every known bird, reptile, yam, and fruit. It was an ideal camping-place and they stayed there for a long time eating their first raw meat and naming and distributing the animals and birds to the eight marriage-subsections or 'malk'. It will be recalled that every child is born into one of these eight malk and can 773* [617]